



# DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

## INFORMATION SERVICE

### FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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To make possible the continuation in the post-war period of the high level of production achieved by the Maine sardine industry during recent years, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service will soon undertake a comprehensive study of the technological problems of this industry, Dr. Ira N. Gabrielson, Director of the Service, reported today to Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes.

The principal aim of the study, which will get under way this summer, is to develop improved methods of processing the pack so that the product will compare favorably with fancy imported brands in flavor, texture, and packaging.

Immediately before the war, domestic production of Maine sardines amounted to about 1,500,000 cases annually, while imports of European sardines--chiefly from Norway--totaled about 750,000 cases. After the beginning of the war in Europe virtually all imports of sardines ceased and the Maine industry increased its pack until it now produces about 3,000,000 cases a year.

Canned sardines packed in Maine differ from those produced in Norway and several other countries of the Atlantic coast of Europe primarily in the method of preparation. Both the foreign and domestic industries utilize the young of the Atlantic sea herring. In addition Norway uses brisling or sprat.

Fish and Wildlife Service technologists will study all operations in the packing process, from the removal of the herring from the traps to the distribution of the finished product. The results of the study will be made available to the industry periodically so that necessary changes may be made in operations to improve the quality and appearance of the pack. The Service will also give assistance in developing wider markets for the domestic product.

If the current heavy production of Maine sardines can be sustained after the war, the industry should be able to furnish employment for a large number of returning servicemen, Dr. Gabrielson reported.